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PRODUCTIVE RELIEF FOR SOVIET RUSSIA

Help the Russian Workers help themselves! That is the slogan which was adopted by the Third World Congress of the Workers International Russian Famine Relief Committee and which will rally the workers of other countries to pledge their labor and money to the work of rebuilding Russian industries and agriculture.

The Third World Congress of the W. I. R. F. R. C. adopted a new economic policy for relief in Russia, which indeed conforms to the New Economic Policy of the Soviet Government. In the main, this new policy consists of doing away with the superficial, philanthropic means of relief and attacking the whole problem and troubles of hunger and starvation by reviving the productive forces of Soviet Russia. The worst phases of the famine are now past, but not its economic consequences. Inasmuch as the new harvest will not wipe out the famine as is claimed in some quarters, it will certainly not do away with the consequences of the famine -- the decay of agriculture and industry and the exhaustion of the population. It can only give a breathing spell in which the friends of Soviet Russia, all over the world, can work out a program to furnish real economic aid for the reconstruction of Soviet Russia's productive forces.

Through an international workers' loan, funds will be provided whereby agricultural and industrial concessions in Soviet Russia can be taken over and operated under the direction of the Workers International Russian Famine Relief Committee. For the first time in history, the greatest economic opportunities are thrown open to the workers of the world by a workers' state.

A new epoch is beginning in the matter of relief work for Soviet Russia. The economic reconstruction of the famine districts, particularly the Volga region, must be undertaken, without, however, discontinuing the distribution of food, which should go on until the next harvest. Hoernle, a German delegate to the convention, pointed out that there is nothing fantastic in the transition from workers' aid in famine relief to an entirely new form of practical internationalism in productive economic assistance to the first workers' government. "We may begin with small means," he said, "but we must keep before our eyes the possibilities of growth and direct our efforts to that end. So the workers' relief, which began as purely charitable famine relief, is the germ from which will develop real international cooperation of the workers." Lunzenberg, secretary of the Workers International Russian Famine Relief Committee, and one of the delegates, stated that the interest in the economic reconstruction of Soviet Russia among the workers of all countries is already strong, and the idea of cooperatives of production, financed through workers' loans, is one which has arisen spontaneously in a number of countries. To unite these isolated efforts of the workers everywhere is now the task of the W. I. R. F. R. C.

The Convention carried a very important decision with regard to laying stress upon the erection of children's homes and the care of destitute children. The Congress undertook to care for 20,000 children, who have been deprived of their parents by the famine. For the further relief of adults, especially workers in the famine districts, a package organization will be established by the W. I. R. F. R. C., which will enable workers, or groups of workers, in other countries to send packages of food to workers, or groups of workers, in Soviet Russia. The unemployed in the famine districts will be the special object of this form of relief.

Comrade Smidovich, representing the All-Russian Central Relief Committee, and one of the Russian delegates to the Convention, briefly sketched the extent to which the Soviet Government aided the famine sufferers. He revealed that the Soviet Government applied all its resources to fighting the famine. In addition to 170 million gold rubles directly appropriated by the government, enormous quantities of seed grain were shipped to the Volga district. One million tons of seed grain were brought into the famine district in addition to foodstuffs, and this contributed greatly to the relief of the famine. At the present time the Soviet Government is emphasizing constructive relief for the famine districts and again it is making available its economic resources for the upbuilding of agriculture and industry in this stricken area.

The Third World Congress of the Workers International Russian Famine Relief Committee was held in Berlin, on the 5th of July, at the call of the international secretary, Willy Lunzenberg. Delegates were present from all the affiliated countries, which number about 20, with the exception of

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those from Argentina, South Africa and Spain, from which countries the delegates could not obtain visas. Many delegates from international labor unions and relief organizations were also present. Much has been accomplished by the W. I. R. F. R. C.

It is doubtful whether Soviet Russia could have survived the many civil wars that were forced upon her, without the help and support of the workers of other countries, without the movement which they initiated for Soviet Russia, and their assistance in the field of economic revival. The work of the W. I. R. F. R. C. is of a peculiar character, which distinguishes it from that of bourgeois philanthropic organizations, in that it seeks to support those elements and groups who are especially important for production, not only with the necessities of life but likewise with machines, tools and instruments. The Third Congress of the W. I. R. F. R. C. marks a most important step forward, not only in its program for Russian reconstruction, but also in the international tactics of the labor movement and in the relation of the workers of other countries to Soviet Russia. In the work of upbuilding Soviet Russia the workers of all countries will find a positive and constructive purpose, which will unite them in practical efforts, in spite of all attempts of trade-union officials and political bureaucrats to divide them. For the first time they will have an opportunity to create a center of real economic power for themselves, not as individuals, but as a united movement, which will be beyond the greedy reach of the exploiters.

Russia's natural wealth lies open to the workers of the world, the investment of whose funds in the reconstruction of her agriculture and in the establishment of an engineering industry will help greatly to make Russia politically and economically an international proletarian state.

A number of resolutions were passed, dealing with the various phases of economic relief in the restoration of Russia's agricultural economy and industrial apparatus, and the relationship of the workers of different countries in tackling the numerous problems arising from this most novel undertaking of the workers of the world. The Congress of the W. I. R. F. R. C. also issued a manifesto to the workers of all countries, calling upon them to apply themselves to this new task in international proletarian solidarity with energy and devotion.

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